

Seven Sundays Devotion: Prayers in Honor of the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph

composed by Blessed Gennario Sarnelli, C.S.S.R. (d. 1744)*

*The Seven Sundays Devotion developed after St. Joseph appeared to a couple of friars who were aboard a ship that sank off the coast of Flanders sometime before the beginning of the 16th century. They managed to stay afloat for three days, all the while praying for help. Because they had always been devoted to St. Joseph, they continuously asked him to save them. On the third day, a man appeared to them, quite radiant, and told them to have faith and trust in St. Joseph. They listened. The man rescued them, getting them safely ashore. Once on land the friars asked him who he was and how could they thank him or what honor they could they pay him. He identified himself as Joseph. He told them that if they wanted to honor him, daily recite the Our Father and Hail Mary seven times while meditating on his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys during his life with Jesus and Mary. The account was recorded in the 16th century by Father John da Fano, a Capuchin, in a little work he wrote about devotion to St. Joseph. It spread in the early 18th century when Redemptorist Father Gennaro Sarnelli (beatified by St. John Paul II in 1996) put together the official prayer--meditations to go along with the seven Our Fathers and Hail Marys. As the devotion spread, popes approved and promoted it by attaching indulgences to this powerful devotional prayer, including Blessed Pius IX.***

Fifth Sunday, March 5, 2023

Fifth Sorrow: The flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:14)

So he arose, and took the Child and His mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt.

Fifth Joy: The overthrow of the idols of Egypt. (Is. 19:1)

Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof.

O most watchful Guardian of the Incarnate Son of God, glorious St. Joseph, what toil was yours in supporting and waiting upon the Son of the most high God, especially in the flight into Egypt! Yet at the same time, how you did rejoice to have always near you God Himself, and to see the idols of the Egyptians fall prostrate to the ground before Him.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us the grace of keeping ourselves in safety from the infernal tyrant, especially by flight from dangerous occasions; may every idol of earthly affection fall from our hearts; may we be wholly employed in serving Jesus and Mary, and for them alone may we live and happily die.

Our Father Hail Mary Glory be

*The Seven Sundays in honor of St. Joseph are observed by receiving Holy Communion in his honor on seven consecutive Sundays, and on each Sunday the prayers in honor of the Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of St. Joseph are recited. This devotion may be practiced at any time of the year, but especially on the seven Sundays preceding his solemnity on March 20th.

**Based on "It's Time to Start the Seven Sundays Devotion to St. Joseph," *National Catholic Register*, <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/saint-joseph-seven-sundays>, Joseph Pronechen, January 28, 2021.